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A-511
NO. 177
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HANDLING INDICATOR

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TO : Department of State WASHINGTON

INFO: MOSCOW

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6/5/78

FROM : Amembassy STOCKHOLM

DATE: February 12, 1965.

SUBJECT: Reaction to Swedish TV Program on Disappearance of Raoul WALLENBERG

REF : Embtel 532; Department's A-115; Embtel 562 602 ✓

As stated in Embtel 562, the Swedish Government was both surprised and taken aback by the publicizing on Swedish television on February 2 of a telegram from the American Embassy in Moscow to the Department of State on April 12, 1945 stating that the Swedish Legation in Moscow had turned down American assistance in the Wallenberg case. The Ambassador's full and frank explanation of the background of the release of the U.S. official telegrams in question has apparently satisfied the concern of the Swedish Government in the matter. However, for the record there are attached, as enclosures 1 and 2, two conversations which the Ambassador had on the subject with Foreign Office Political Director Hichens-Bergström.

Apart from the Swedish Government's reaction to the release and publication of the U.S. official messages and the Embassy's role therein, is the question of the effect the TV program has had on Swedish public opinion. Because of criticism directed against the Swedish Legation's action in refusing American help, the Swedish Government has felt impelled to issue a press release through the Foreign Office, a translation of which is attached as enclosure number 3. (Two copies of the original Swedish version of the Foreign Office press release are also attached.)

It will be seen that the Foreign Office press release blandly ignores the criticisms levelled against the Legation's action. At the same time, the confused and turgid quotation attributed to the Swedish Minister, Söderblom, in the third paragraph of the press release implies that it was the U.S. Embassy in Moscow that did not wish to pursue the matter. The Foreign Office apparently went even further, because Dagens Nyheter on February 9 stated

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"the Foreign Office tells Dagens Nyheter that it is still unclear just how the Swedish rejection of the American offer of assistance was made -- 'and whether the rejection did at all come from Swedish quarters'", (the inner quote apparently refers to the Foreign Office official's exact words).

The fact that the Foreign Office press release used a partial and confusing quote of Minister Söderblom's without publication of the full text of the message (while publishing the text of the American official documents) has aroused the suspicions of the Swedish press. Thus, Liberal Göteborg's Handels Tidningen wrote that "unfortunately one has reason to suspect that the Swedish version was doctored" (not doctored by the Foreign Office, but by Söderblom at the time). Liberal Stockholm Dagens Nyheter was sarcastic as to why the Foreign Office did not produce the full text of the Söderblom message, hinting it was because Wallenberg was an American agent. Social Democratic Stockholms-Tidningen, however, ignoring the careful avoidance of the question by the Foreign Office press release, wrote: "The American offer in April 1945 of diplomatic support in the search for Raoul Wallenberg was judged as non-desirable by the Swedish Moscow Minister, and the Foreign Office was of the same opinion." The principal press reactions to date are enclosed as enclosure no. 4.

If there should be further critical press reaction to the Foreign Office press release, it is entirely possible that the Government will feel called upon to take some further action. One interesting aspect of the matter which has not reached the public domain is the advance Soviet approach to the Swedish Embassy in Moscow (the program had been advertised for several days) saying that the Soviets saw no point in a public airing of the Wallenberg case on TV. The fact that the Russians would make such a bald approach and that the Swedish Government, either as a result of it or because of anticipated Soviet sensitivity, refused to go beyond giving documentary help to the TV producer, could provide considerable ammunition to the press and the opposition parties if it were to become known.

For the Ambassador:



George R. Andrews
Second Secretary of Embassy

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